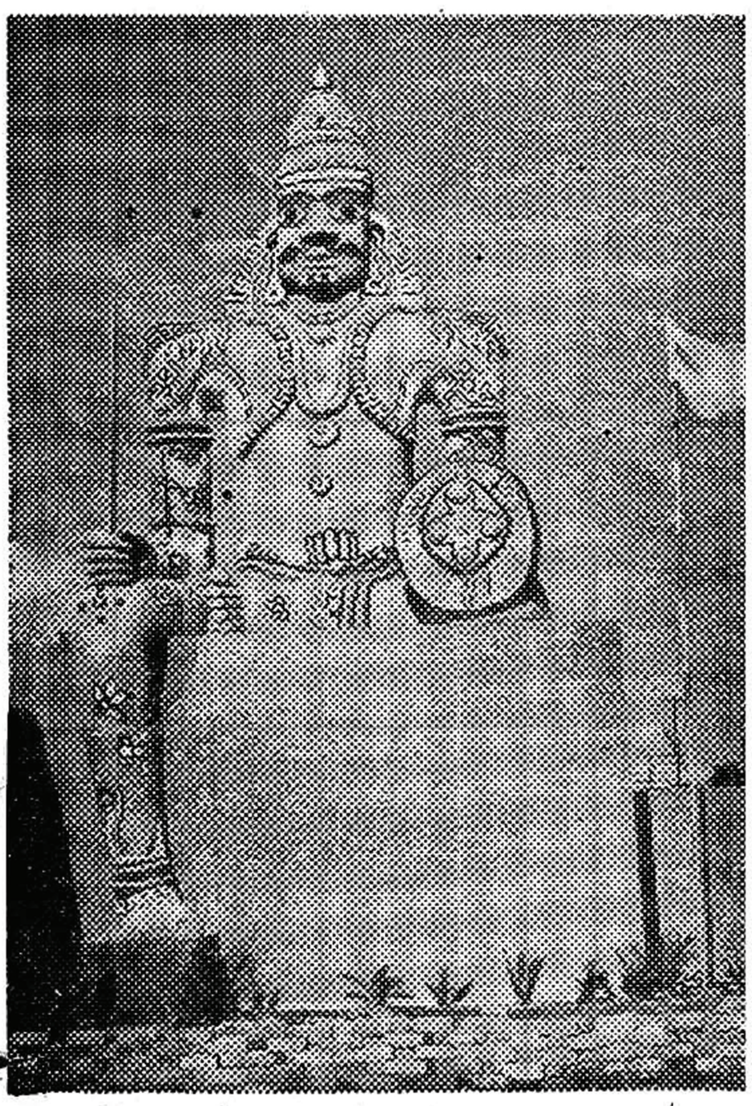
1974ஆம் ஆண்டு கலைஞர் அரசு சென்னையில் நடத்திய ஏறுதழுவுதல் விழா.

PONGAL TOURIST TRADE FAIR IN MADRAS

The President Thiru V. V. Giri with the Chief Minister and the Education Minister at the inaugural function.



One of the two 32 feet high typical village deities at either side of the entrance.

The celebration of Pongal Tourist Festival is one of the many steps taken by the Tamil Nadu Government towards bringing more tourists down South. Because, Pongal is a major festival of the region which reflects the culture and traditions of the people, in this part of the country. Pongal also incidentally comes in mid-January every year during the tourist season of October to February. Last year the festival was extremely successful. Foreign tourists have applauded our efforts. This year the festival has been organised on a grand scale in all Tourist Centres of the State such as Madurai, Tiruchi and more impressively in Madras. A special feature of the festival in Madras is the Pongal Tourist Trade Fair organised by the Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation at the Island Grounds at Madras.

A Fair with A Difference

This is a fair with a difference. It is a tourism-oriented Fair. At the main entrance are two village dieties of 32 ft. height which greet the visitors with village drummers on either side. Next comes an array of temple pillars. The whole facade of the entrance was done by the staff of the College of Arts and Crafts. On passing the pillars there is the plaza of a little pond, waterfalls, lawns with lighting arrangements adding charm to the atmosphere. Around the plaza runs a mini-train.

Various organisations, institutions, departments, etc. are participating. Central and State Government departments like Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity, Southern Railway, Public Works, Industries, Fisheries, Forest, Information and Public Relations Department, autonomous bodies like Air India, India Tourism Development Corporation, Bharath Heavy Electricals, Coffee Board, Co-optex, Khadi and Village Industries Board, Electricity Board, Housing Board, Water and Drainage Board, Hoteliers, Banks and several private business houses have put up their pavilions. There is also a shopping arcade. These pavilions will highlight the progress of the State as well as the various aspects of Tourism development. Arts and Sculptures of Tamil Nadu, the ancient musical instruments will be on display. An artistes village with the craftsmen at work will be the highlight of the Fair.

JALLIKATTU—

A GALLANTRY SHOW IN TAMIL NADU

With the co-operation of SPIC and the Department of Animal Husbandry, the Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation organised Jalli Kattu at Madras on two days 20—1—1974 & 22—1—1974, at Nehru Stadium.

Jalli Kattu is a rural sport of Tamil Nadu held especially in the Southern Districts of Madurai, Ramnad and Tirunelveli during the Pongal Festival as a gala event.

References to Jalli Kattu are found in ancient Tamil Literature. The person who wins in the Jalli Kattu is often sought by the Maidens of the village in Matrimony. There are innumerable instances of such events in the Tamil Literature.

The Jalli Kattu is held on a chosen day when the whole village assembles at the main thoroughfare of the village and the bulls are let out one by one with decorations or with a towel tied to the horns of the bulls. Young men standing in a row on both sides of the road chases the bull and catch hold of the horn and take off the towel tied to the horn and take off the towel tied to the horn with money sometimes. There are variations of this nature of sport.

Some animals won't run but stand and tackle the tacklers with unusual ferocity. Such animals earn a name 'Nintru Kuthi Kalai' (Bull which goes without running) and the man who tackles them, earns just fame. No monetary benefits are involved. However, some rich and proud owners may tie a sovereign or a gold chain round the horns as a challenge, and the tacklers, if they can, take them.

It is an occasion to invite guests from neighbouring villages. And all of them arrive in their own carts, which are specially decorated. The men and women are colourfully dressed. Small shops spring up selling flowers, sugarcane, murukkus and country plantains. Starched sarees, withering jasmine soaked in sweat and neem oil add special flavour to the atmosphere.

Drummers and folk artistes with their numerous noisy instruments come to the village from the surrounding areas. They wait at the village border where the bulls are decorated with colourful jari clothes, specially prepared for the occasion. Each bull is held by two ropes on either side by two men, as if to impress the uncontrolllable nature of the animal. The owner and his attendants are taken in a procession with music. They are entertained to a feast at a common place. The bulls are kept under some shady tree for the visitors, to watch and admire. This is something like the preview of race horses at the paddock. Again they are taken in a procession to the stockade ground to be stripped of all the decorations. The letting out of animals will start in the afternoon, actual hour depending on the number of animals received.

It is really a problem to catch the bulls which run through the whole street. With no strings whatsoever, they roam about that village and the neighbouring areas for days and the owners and their men employ all sorts of tactics to catch them.

In view of the risks involved in this game, to the catchers as well as the spectators, the TTDC has arranged barricades at the Nehru Stadium so that, no harm is caused to the spectators. The only person who is likely to be injured is the catcher and he being trained expert, he knows the tricks of the game and will always escape with light injuries, if at all.

For the first time in the history of Madurai City, a Jalli Kattu was held during January, 1973, in the urban atmosphere of Madurai and due to unprecedented crowds blocking the passage of the bulls, some persons were injured and fortunately there were no fatal cases. Seeing the arrangements made at Madurai, extra precautions have been taken at Madras to conduct Jalli Kattu as a real sport of interest both to tourists and the lay-public. The game has great potentials of being developed as a bull fight of Tamil Nadu to attract foreign tourists. Only with this view the sport is now taken for the first time to the City of Madras.

Arrangements have been made inside the stadium to barricades the place where actual Jalli Kattu was held. The spectators sitting around the Stadium will have a clear view of the event, just like witnessing a foot-ball match or a cricket match. It is hoped that this being the first time such a grand sport is arranged under the auspicies of Department of Tourism depicting the glory of Tamil Nadu, the public will avail of this rare opportunity and witness the Jalli Kattu on both the days of January 20th and 22nd.

As this sport is native to Madurai and Ramnad Districts, a screening Committee at Madurai consisting of the Officials of the Animal Husbandry Department, the Information Department and the Public also co-operated in selecting the bulls and also the catchers from both the districts of Ramnad and Madurai. They have succeeded in selecting 38 best possible bulls and 40 catchers of repute.

All the bulls were loaded at Madurai in a special Express Goods Wagons on 17—1—1974 and they reached Madras on 18—1—1974. As the bulls and the catchers are brought from such a long distance and the public of Madras should not also be disappointed, the sport is arranged for 2 days, so that, a large number of people can witness.

The Southern Railway authorities at Madras and also at Madurai had taken a keen interest in conducting Jalli Kattu at Madras and have helped in arranging special accommodation in the trains leaving Madurai for the owners, catchers and attendants to reach Madras on 18th January ; and also to move the goods wagons of the bulls expeditiously to Madras.

Precautions have been taken *en route* for checking the bulls by the Doctors of the Animal Husbandry Department, so that, they reach Madras safely. During their stay at Madras they were looked after by the Doctors of the Animal Husbandry. The S.P.C.A. is also taking interest in the up-keep and the maintenance of the bulls. *